

CHAPTER 19

Maryam

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 6 *sections*; 98 *verses*)

The controversy with Christianity is continued in this chapter, and the title is taken from the name of ‘Îsâ’s mother, *Maryam*. The circumstances connected with her having given birth to ‘Îsâ are narrated here. But while the last chapter deals at greater length with the history of Christianity than with its doctrines, this aims at proving the falsity of the Christian religious dogmas, which it shows to be absolute innovations and quite foreign to the teachings of all the prophets.

The first two sections deal with the last representatives of prophecy in the house of Isrâ’îl, viz., Yahyâ and ‘Îsâ. The false doctrines that grew up round the name of the latter are clearly denounced at the end of the second section. The history of Ibrâhîm in the third, and that of some other prophets in the fourth, are referred to as showing that Allâh always sent men as His prophets to reform the world. Towards the close of the fourth section it is stated that mere faith unattended with good deeds is nothing, and that faith cannot benefit a people except when it is translated into practice. The fifth section deals with the opponents of the prophets generally, while the sixth brings to a close the discussion of the Christian religion by outspokenly denouncing the false doctrine of the sonship of “Jesus”.

It is quite certain that the most important portion of this chapter, viz., that relating to the history of Maryam and ‘Îsâ, was revealed early at Makkah, most probably about the fifth year of the Holy Prophet’s mission. Because this portion was recited by Ja‘far, head of the first batch of the Muslim immigrants in Ethiopia, before the Christian king of that country, when a deputation of the Quraish urged the king to expel the Muslim refugees from his country (*Musnad* of Imâm *Ahmad ibn Hanbal* (*Hadîth*) vol. I, p. 203). The emigration took place in the fifth year, and this chapter, therefore, must have been revealed before that.

SECTION 1: Zakariyyâ and Yahyâ

In the name of Allâh, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 *Kâf hâ yâ ‘ain sâd^a*

2 A mention of the mercy of thy *Rabb* to His servant Zakariyyâ —

3 When he called upon his *Rabb*, crying in secret.

4 He said: My *Rabb*, my bones are weakened, and my head flares with hoariness, and I have never been unsuccessful in my prayer to Thee, my *Rabb*.

5 And I fear my kinsfolk after me, and my wife is barren, so grant me from Thyself an heir ^a

6 Who should inherit me and inherit of the Children of Ya‘qûb, and make him, my *Rabb*, acceptable (to You).^a

7 O Zakariyyâ, We give you good news of a boy, whose name is Yahyâ: We have not made before anyone his equal. ^a

1a. *Kâf* stands for *Kâf-in*, *Sufficient*, *hâ* for *Hâd-in*, *Guide*, *yâ* for *Yamîn*, *Blessed*, *‘ain* for *‘Alîm*, *Knowing*, and *sâd* for *Sâdiq*, *Truthful*. *Yâ* has also been interpreted as being a letter of interjection, meaning *O*, but according to JA, *yâ* stands for *Yamîn*, One possessing *yumn* or *blessings*.

5a. His fear was due to their not leading righteous lives, and he feared there would be none to lead people into the ways of righteousness after him.

6a. The inheritance of the Children of Ya‘qûb is the inheritance of the Divine blessing of prophethood, which had been promised to Ya‘qûb’s children.

7a. *Samî* means a *competitor*, or *contender for superiority* in eminence or glory; hence also an *equal*, or a *like*. The word occurs again in this chapter in verse 65 and bears the same meaning, not *namesake*, because there it is spoken about Allâh. It is not, of course, meant that one like John or equal to him was never before created in the world. According to the reconstructed Gospels: “Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist” (Matthew 11:11). The meaning is that one like him was not born in Zacharias’ family. Because in the previous verse it is his own relatives about whom Zacharias says

that he feared, and therefore an assurance was now given to him that the promised son would not be like the other members of his family whom he feared. Or the meaning may be that one like him had not appeared in that age.

8 He said: My *Rabb*, how shall I have a son, and my wife is barren, and I have reached extreme old age?

9 He said: So (it will be). Your *Rabb* says: It is easy to Me, and indeed I created thee before, when you was nothing.

10 He said: My *Rabb*, give me a sign. He said, ‘Thy sign is that you speak not to people three nights, being in sound health. *a*

11 So he went forth to his people from the sanctuary and proclaimed to them: Glorify (Allâh) morning and evening.

12 O Yahyâ, take hold of the Book with strength. And We granted him wisdom when a child,

13 And kind-heartedness from Us and purity. And he was dutiful,

14 And kindly to his parents, and he was not insolent, disobedient. *a*

15 And peace on him the day he was born and the day he died, and the day he is raised to life!

10a. The word *lail*, i.e., *night*, is interpreted as including the day, as *yaum*, or *day*, includes the *night*. Moreover, in 3:41 the words are *three days*, thus showing that three days and three nights are meant. It should also be noted that the Qur’ân does not support the idea that Zakariyyâ was struck dumb, because it speaks of him as being *in sound health*. The object of assuming silence was to be engaged solely in prayer to the Divine Being, and hence Zakariyyâ told his people also to glorify Allâh; see also 3:41*a*.

14a. The various aspects of the character of Yahyâ deserve to be noted. He was pure and sinless and never disobeyed Allâh. In fact, what is said of one prophet is equally true of all. They are, all pure from birth, and never disobey Allâh.

SECTION 2: Maryam and ‘Îsâ

16 And mention Maryam in the Book. When she drew aside from her family to an eastern place;

17 So she screened herself from them. Then We sent to her Our *Rûhanâ* (i.e. Divine revelation in *Mutashâbihât* terms) and it appeared to her as a well-made man.^a

18 She said: I flee for refuge from you to the Beneficent, if you are one guarding against evil.

19 He said: I am only bearer of a message of your *Rabb*: That I will give you a Ghulâman zakiyyan.^a

20 She said: How can I have a son and no mortal has yet touched me, nor have I been unchaste?

21 He said: So (it will be). Your *Rabb* says: It is easy to Me; and that We may make him a sign to men and a mercy from Us.^a And it is a matter decreed.^b

22 Then she conceived him; and withdrew with him to a remote place.

23 And the throes of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm tree. ^a She said, ‘Oh, would that I had died before this, and had been a thing quite forgotten! ^b

17a. This shows that it was in a vision that the *Rûhanâ* (i.e. Divine revelation in *Mutashâbihât* terms) came, and the conversation that follows also took place in a vision. The word *tamaththala* (“it appeared”) used here lends support to this, for the word signifies *assuming the likeness of another thing*, and this happens only in a vision. Furthermore, the information or communication which come via the means of *malâ’ikah* from Allâh “appears to His chosen ones only in a vision”, metaphorically speaking, as the physical eye does not see the *malâ’ikah*.

19a. The words *I will give thee a pure boy* are the words of the message. The *Rûh*, in fact, refers to the Divine message, as it always does. Every word of the Arabic Glorious Qur’ân is the word of Allâh, but every word was delivered to the Prophet by the means of a *malik*.

21a. ‘Îsâ was a *sign* to human beings, in the sense that he was made a prophet, and every prophet is a sign, because the Divine revelation, which is granted to him,

affords a clear proof of the existence of the Divine Being. Or, he was a sign to the Isrâ'îlites in particular, because with him prophethood came to an end among the Isrâ'îlites.

21b. She conceived him in the ordinary way in which women conceive children, see 3:44a which states: **3:44a.** The commentators think that the reference is to verse 37 when Maryam as a child was dedicated to the temple and that lots were then cast as a result of which Maryam was given into the charge of Zacharias. But this is quite out of place. The Arabic Glorious Qur'ân has described her history in the natural order. Her mother conceives her (verse 35); she is born and named (verse 36); she is dedicated to and resides in the temple under the charge of Zakariyyâ (verse 37). Here follows the narration of Zakariyyâ praying for a righteous son when he sees the devoutness of Maryam and verses 38–41 are, as it were, parenthetical. The story of Maryam is again taken up in verse 42 where her election is spoken of, which is undoubtedly the time when she attained to the age of discretion (verses 42, 43). Verse 44 cannot therefore refer back to her history as a child in the temple. In the natural order it refers to a much later period.

It will be noted that when Maryam's mother prayed for her at her birth (verse 36), she also prayed for her offspring and therefore she had evidently in mind the time when Maryam would be married and become a mother. Verse 45 clearly gives Maryam news of the birth of a child and therefore the particular incident referred to in verse 44 is the incident of her espousal. The casting of lots and the contention as to who should have her in his charge could not mean anything but her charge as a wife. In view of these considerations, verse 44 cannot be taken but as referring to the espousal of Maryam. Lots were evidently cast because as a child she had been dedicated to the temple, and it was now by a lot only that she could be given away in marriage. Maryam's history as narrated in the reconstructed Gospels casts no light on these circumstances and hence the verse starts with the statement that this was an announcement relating to the unseen. In fact, the whole history of Maryam and 'Îsâ was enveloped in darkness until the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân announced their right position as two righteous servants of Allâh and rejected both extreme views, the Jewish view that Jesus was conceived in sin and was illegitimate and the Christian view that he was God or Son of God Who had entered Mary's womb.

He was only what the Prophet described him to be in his controversy with the Najrân deputation when he said to them: “Do you not know that ‘Îsâ was conceived by a woman in the manner in which all women conceive? Then she was delivered of him as women are delivered of their children? Then he was fed as children are fed. Then he ate food and drank water and answered the call of nature (as all mortals do)?” The deputation replied to all these questions in the affirmative, on which the Prophet said: “Then how can your claim (that he was God or Son of God) be true?” (*Jâmi‘ al-Bayân fî Tafsîr al-Qur’ân* (Commentary), by Imâm Abû Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn Jarîr al-Ṭabarî). The Prophet’s clear arguments which even the Christian deputation could not question, settles the matter that ‘Îsâ was conceived in the ordinary manner and that Maryam became a wife and mother in the ordinary way.

24 So a voice came to her from beneath her: Grieve not, surely your *Rabb* has provided a stream beneath you.

25 And shake towards you the trunk of the palm-tree, it will drop on you fresh ripe dates. ^a

26 So eat and drink and cool the eye. Then if you see any mortal, say, ‘Surely I have vowed a fast to the Beneficent, so I will not speak to any man today. ^a

27 Then she came to her people with him, carrying him.^a They said, ‘O Maryam, thou hast indeed brought a strange thing!’^b

23a. This shows that Maryam gave birth to ‘Îsâ while on a journey; hence the reference to water and food in verses 24 and 25, such as one can only find in a journey. That she was going to a distant place is shown by verse 22. She may have had recourse to the trunk of a palm-tree to find a support in the throes of childbirth.

23b. Maryam gave birth to ‘Îsâ under the ordinary circumstances which women experience in giving birth to children. The throes of childbirth were too severe for her to bear, and hence she gave utterance to such words. The reference to the throes of childbirth clearly shows that an ordinary human child was coming into the world.

25a. The Qur'ân does not accept that 'Îsâ was born on 25th December. It was the time when fresh ripe dates are found on palm-trees. It is now a recognized fact that the 25th of December was not Jesus' birthday. Bishop Barnes says in the *Rise of Christianity*: "There is, moreover, no authority for the belief that December 25 was the actual birthday of "Jesus". If we can give any credence to the birth-story of Luke: with the shepherds keeping watch by night in the fields near Bethlehem. Then, the birth of "Jesus" did not take place in winter, when the night temperature is so low in the hill country of Judaea that snow is not uncommon. After much argument our Christmas day seems to have been accepted about A.D. 300" (page 79). Bishop Barnes then goes on to relate that the 25th of December was taken from the Persian cult, Mithra being the God of the invincible sun: "And his festal day was suitably that on which, after the winter solstice, the sun again began clearly to show his strength".

26a. It was really a kind of fast. Zakariyyâ, as we have already seen, was told not to speak to people for three days.

27a. The conversation that is related to have taken place in the verses that follow is alone sufficient to make it clear that the coming of Maryam to her people with her son. It tells the story, as stated in this verse, which relates to a time when 'Îsâ had grown sufficiently old to be raised to the dignity of a prophet. And that he received Divine revelation, as he speaks of having been given the book in verse 30. The commentators, merely because the verse follows one in which the birth of 'Îsâ is spoken of; understand the incident to relate to a time when 'Îsâ was still a baby. But it should be noted that the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân does not relate stories in all their details, and often omits a number of incidents which are not needed for its purpose. Compare, for instance, the 11th and 12th verses, the first of, which relates only Zakariyyâ receiving the joyful news of a son, while the second asks that son to take hold of the Book with strength. 'Îsâ could only say that he was made a prophet, when he was actually entrusted with the mission of a prophet, and not before, and 'Îsâ's address to his people, as related in verses 30 and 31, clearly shows that he had already been entrusted with that mission. Moreover, it is unreasonable to suppose that, as soon as Maryam gave birth to the

child, she took it to her people to make a show of it. The Qur'ân, verse 22, states that she was then going to some remote place, and thus the incident related here could not have taken place immediately after the delivery. The word *carrying* does not show that she was carrying him in her arms; it means that he was being carried on an animal. Compare 9:92, where some of the companions are spoken of as coming to the Prophet that he might *carry* them, and he is related as saying in reply that he had not that on which to *carry* them.

28 O sister of Hârûn,^a your father was not a wicked man, nor was your mother an unchaste woman!

29 But she pointed to him. They said: How should we speak to one who is a child in the cradle?^a

27b. The reference in Maryam's *bringing a strange thing* may be to her having given birth to a son who claimed greater authority than the elders of Isrâ'îl, with a deeper hint to the calumny against her, for which see 4:156a. But the word *farî* also signifies *a forger of lies*. It is remarkable that in his reply 'Îsâ does not make a single reference to the circumstances of his birth. Hence the inference is quite reasonable that the question, whichever significance of the words may be taken, was directed against the mission of 'Îsâ and not against the circumstances relating to his birth.

28a. As shown in 3:35a, Maryam belonged to the priestly class, as Wherry also admits, "because she was of the Levitical race, as by her being related to Elizabeth it would seem she was." And therefore she is rightly called *ukht Hârûn*, or *sister of Hârûn*, the word *ukht* being by no means limited to the close blood-relationship like its equivalent in English; see 3:35a for further explanation. *Jâmi' al-Bayân fî Tafsîr al-Qur'ân* (Commentary), by Imâm Abû Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarîr al-Ṭabarî relates the following incident: Ṣafîyyah (the Prophet's wife) came to the Messenger of Allâh (may peace and the blessings of Allâh be upon him!) and said: "The women say to me, a Jewess, daughter of two Jews". He said to her: "Why did you not say: Surely my father is Hârûn and my uncle is Mûsâ and my husband is Muḥammad?"

29a. Old and learned Children of Isrâ'îlites would no doubt speak of a young man who was born and brought up before their eyes as *a child in the cradle*, as if disdaining to address one so young. See what follows, verses 30, 31, wherein it is made quite clear that the incident mentioned here relates to a time when 'Îsâ was a grown-up man.

30 He said: I am indeed a servant of Allâh. He has given me the Book and made me a prophet: ^a

31 And He has made me blessed wherever I may be, and He has enjoined on me prayer and poor-rate so long as I live: ^a

32 And to be kind to my mother; and He has not made me insolent, unblessed.^a

33 And peace on me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I am raised to life.

34 Such is 'Îsâ son of Maryam — a statement of truth about which they dispute.

35 It beseems not Allâh that He should take to Himself a son. Glory be to Him! When He decrees a matter He only says to it, Be, and it is.

36 And surely Allâh is my *Rabb* and your *Rabb*, so serve Him. This is the right path. ^a

30a. It is clear that this conversation did not take place when 'Îsâ was an infant in the cradle, but when he had actually been made a prophet.

31a. It is absurd to suppose that prayers and alms were enjoined on 'Îsâ while he was only a day old and that he really observed these injunctions at that age. In fact, 'Îsâ's answer clearly shows that he was addressing his people after he had been entrusted with the mission of prophethood.

32a. Here only the mother is spoken of, whereas in a similar case in verse 14 Yahyâ is spoken of as being kind to both parents. This may be due to the fact that Joseph may not have been living at the time when "Jesus" spoke these words. Joseph was already an old man when he married Mary, and by the time that the ministry of "Jesus" begins we find no mention of him even in the Gospels, the mother and brothers being the only relations mentioned. Or, the mother alone is mentioned because the Gospels relate an incident showing that "Jesus" was rude to

his mother (Matthew 12:48), and this verse disproves the statement, it being one of the objects of the Qur'ân to clear 'Îsâ of all false charges.

36a. According to Matthew, when "Jesus" was tempted of the devil, who asked him to worship him, Jesus' reply was: "For it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:10).

37 But parties from among them differed; so woe to those who disbelieve, because of their presence on a grievous day!

38 How clearly will they hear and see on the day when they come to Us; but the wrongdoers are today in manifest error.

39 And warn them of the day of Regret, ^a when the matter is decided. And they are (now) in negligence and they believe not.

40 Surely We inherit the earth and those thereon, and to Us they are returned.

SECTION 3: **Ibrâhîm**

41 And mention Ibrâhîm in the Book. Surely he was a truthful man, a prophet.

42 When he said to his sire: O my sire, why worshippest thou that which hears not, nor sees, nor can it avail you ought?

43 O my sire, to me indeed has come the knowledge which has not come to thee; so follow me, I will guide you on a right path.

44 O my sire, serve not the shaitân. Surely the shaitân is disobedient to the Beneficent.

45 O my sire, surely I fear lest a punishment from the Beneficent should afflict thee, so that thou become a friend of the shaitân.

39a. The Day of Judgment is here called the day of Regret, because human beings will then regret that they wasted the opportunity given to them to work for their own good.

46 He said, 'Dislike you my deities, O Ibrâhîm? If you desist not, I will certainly drive you away. And leave me for a time.'

47 He said: Peace be to you! I shall pray my *Rabb* to forgive you. Surely He is ever Kind to me.

48 And I withdraw from you and that which you call on besides Allâh, and I call upon my *Rabb*. Maybe I shall not remain unblessed in calling upon my *Rabb*.

49 So, when he withdrew from them and that which they worshipped besides Allâh, We gave him Ishâq and Ya‘qûb. And each (of them) We made a prophet.^a

50 And We gave them of Our mercy, and We granted them a truthful mention of eminence.^a

SECTION 4: Other Prophets are raised

51 And mention Mûsâ in the Book. Surely he was one purified, and was a messenger, a prophet.^a

49a. It is elsewhere made clear that Jacob was his grandson (11:71 and 21:72). Nor should it be supposed that *giving* signifies only the giving of a son, for of Mûsâ it is said a few verses further on, *We gave him his brother Hârûn, a prophet*, though *Hârûn* was older than Mûsâ.

50a. The literal significance is, *We made for them the tongue of truth to be lofty*. As *the tongue* is the vehicle of expression, therefore *lisâna ṣidq-in* stands for *a truthful mention*. However humble a life a prophet may lead, he is granted an eminence among later generations, but the distinguishing characteristic of a prophet is that his record of eminence is a truthful one.

51a. *Rasûl*, or *messenger*, means *one who is sent with a message* for the regeneration of men, while *nabî*, or *prophet*, is one who has the gift of prophecy, i.e., who receives a *naba’* or *information* from on high. The elect who are chosen for the regeneration of man are called *prophets* as receiving knowledge from Allâh, and *messengers* as delivering to humanity the messages they receive.

52 And We called to him from the blessed side of the mountain, and We made him draw nigh in communion.

53 And We gave him out of Our mercy his brother *Hârûn*, a prophet.

54 And mention Ismâ‘îl in the Book. Surely he was truthful in promise, and he was a messenger, a prophet.^a

55 And he enjoined on his people prayer and almsgiving, and was one in whom his *Rabb* was well pleased.

56 And mention Idrîs in the Book. Surely he was a truthful man, a prophet,

57 And We raised him to an elevated state.^a

58 These are they on whom Allâh bestowed favours, from among the prophets, of the seed of Âdam, and of those whom We carried with Nûh, and of the seed of Ibrâhîm and Isrâ‘îl, and of those whom We guided and chose. When the messages of the Beneficent were recited to them, they fell down in submission, weeping.^a

Prostration

54a. Ishmael was a prophet. When Ibrâhîm prayed to the Lord “that Ishmael might live before Thee” (Genesis 17:18), the reply was “And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee” (Genesis 17:20), which shows that Ishmael was made a prophet; see 2:124a, 125c. In the Arabic Glorious Qur’ân Ismâ‘îl is mentioned by name on the following occasions as one of the prophets: 2:125, 127– 129, 133, 136, 140; 6:86; 19:54, 55; 21:85; 38:48, while he is referred to in 37:101– 107.

57a. Idrîs is the same as Enoch. The word *raf‘*, which is used of ‘Îsâ, is also used of Enoch, and some commentators therefore misinterpret the words as indicating that Enoch was taken up to heaven alive. But the same mistake is made in both cases, for *raf‘* signifies *raising to high dignity*; see 437b. The mistake seems to have arisen from what is said of Enoch in the Bible. Thus, in Genesis 5:24: “And Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him”. The New Testament is plainer yet: “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him” (Hebrews 11:5). Only once again is he mentioned in the Arabic Glorious Qur’ân, viz., in 21:85. 58a.

Here the reciter prostrates himself; see 7:206a.

59 But there came after them an evil generation, who wasted prayers and followed lusts, so they will meet perdition,

60 Except those who repent and believe and do good — such will enter the Garden, and they will not be wronged in ought:

61 Gardens of perpetuity which the Beneficent has promised to His servants in the Unseen. Surely His promise ever comes to pass.

62 They will hear therein no vain discourse, but only, Peace! And they have their sustenance therein, morning and evening. ^a

63 This is the Garden which We cause those of Our servants to inherit who keep their duty. ^a

64 And we descend not but by the command of thy *Rabb*. To Him belongs what is before us and what is behind us and what is between these, and your *Rabb* is never forgetful. ^a

62a. This description of the Hereafter is really to show that the Muslim in this world talks of nothing but peace. Islâm is really *peace*, and it is by making peace here with the Creator and His creatures that one can find peace hereafter. This is the great truth underlying the Islâmic idea of paradise, for of paradise it is frequently stated in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân that there will be nothing but peace therein.

63a. The state of *perfect peace* spoken of in the previous verse is here called the *Garden*, which the righteous will inherit.

64a. The words, *we descend not*, are generally understood to refer to the coming of *malâ'ikah* with Divine revelation. There is no doubt that the reference here is to the revelation of the Holy Prophet, the significance being that, as the *malâ'ikah* brought revelation to previous prophets, so they now bring revelation, by the command of the *Rabb*, to the Holy Prophet Muḥammad. The concluding words of the verse, *thy Rabb is never forgetful*, signify that the promises and prophecies made by God through His prophets could not be forgotten. Thus an account of the previous prophets is concluded with a reference to the revelation of the Holy Prophet, and this is the subject dealt with in the remaining sections of the chapter. Some, however, think that these are the words of the faithful, which they will speak when they enter paradise (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî).

65 *Rabb* of the *samâwât* and the earth and what is between them so serve Him and be patient in His service. Know you any one equal to Him?

SECTION 5: How the Opponents were Dealt with

66 And says man: When I am dead, shall I truly be brought forth alive?

67 Does not man remember that We created him before, when he was nothing?

68 So by thy *Rabb*! We shall certainly gather them together and the *shaitân*, then shall We bring them around hell on their knees.^a

69 Then We shall draw forth from every sect those most rebellious against the Beneficent.

70 Again, We certainly know best those who deserve most to be burned therein.

71 And there is not one of you but shall come to it. This is an unavoidable decree of thy *Rabb*.^a

72 And We shall deliver those who guard against evil,^a and leave the wrongdoers therein on their knees.^b

68a. The *shaiyâtîn* here are clearly those who lead others to evil.

71a. The *wicked* only are spoken of, as the context shows clearly. That the righteous will not go to hell is made clear further on: "The day when We gather the dutiful to the Beneficent to receive honours, and drive the guilty to hell, as thirsty beasts" (verses 85, 86). According to 21:102, *the righteous will not hear the faintest sound of hell*.

72a. For the meaning of *thumma*, the first word of verse 72, see 2:29 or 45. It is wrong to suppose that the righteous will be first cast into hell and then delivered; see 1558.

72b. Compare verse 68, where it is said that the guilty will be brought to hell *on their knees*.

73 And when Our clear messages are recited to them, those who disbelieve say to those who believe: Which of the two parties is better in position and better in assembly?^a

74 And how many a generation have We destroyed before them, who had better possessions and appearance!

75 Say: As for him who is in error, the Beneficent will prolong his length of days; until they see what they were threatened with, either the punishment or the Hour.^a Then they will know who is worse in position and weaker in forces.^b

76 And Allâh increases in guidance those who go aright. And deeds that endure, the good deeds, are, with thy *Rabb*, better in recompense and yield better return.

77 Have you seen him who disbelieves in Our messages and says: I shall certainly be given wealth and children?^a

78 Has he gained knowledge of the unseen, or made a covenant with the Beneficent?

79 By no means! We write down what he says, and We shall lengthen to him the length of the chastisement,

73a. That is, they are proud of their great wealth and numerous forces.

75a. The *Hour* signifies the *hour of doom*, the time of destruction, when their power will be utterly destroyed. The '*adhâb*', in comparison with the doom, signifies a lighter punishment.

75b. In these words it is clearly indicated that the time will come when they will find themselves in an evil condition and their forces weaker than the forces of Truth.

77a. They have no eye for the higher values of life; all they want is wealth and children.

80 And We shall inherit from him what he says, and he will come to Us alone. ^a

81 And they have taken deities besides Allâh, that they should be to them a source of strength —

82 By no means! They will soon deny their worshipping them, and be their adversaries.

SECTION 6: False Doctrine of Sonship

83 Seest thou not that We send the *shaiyâtîn* against the disbelievers, inciting them incitingly?

84 So make no haste against them. We only number out to them a number (of days).^a

85 The day when We gather the dutiful to the Beneficent to receive honours, ^a

86 And drive the guilty to hell, as thirsty beasts. ^a

87 They have no power of intercession, save him who has made a covenant with the Beneficent.

88 And they say: The Beneficent has taken to Himself a son.

89 Certainly you make an abominable assertion!

80a. The reference is to his saying in verse 77: “I shall certainly be given wealth and children”. Allâh’s inheriting thus means that their wealth and children will be taken away from them and ultimately be a source of strength to Islâm.

84a. Because of their own actions their doom is already decreed.

85a. *Wafd* is a party coming to a king to receive honours (*Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur’ân* (Dictionary of Qur’ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain *al-Râghib al-Isfahânî* and the *Lisân al-‘Arab* (Dictionary), by ‘Allâmah Abu-l-Fa^ḍl Jamâl al Dîn Muḥammad ibn Mukarram).

86a. *Wird* signifies *coming to* or *arriving at water*, (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). Hence it signifies *thirsty*, because thirsty beasts are driven to water.

90 The heavens may almost be rent thereat, and the earth cleave asunder, and the mountains fall down in pieces,

91 That they ascribe a son to the Beneficent!

92 And it is not worthy of the Beneficent that He should take to Himself a son. ^a

93 There is none in the *samâwât* and the earth but comes to the Beneficent as a servant.

94 Certainly He comprehends them, and has numbered them all.

95 And every-one of them will come to Him on the day of Resurrection, alone.

96 Those who believe and do good deeds, for them the Beneficent will surely bring about love.^a

92a. The five verses 89 – 93 contain a most emphatic and clear condemnation of the Christian doctrine of the Godhead of Jesus Christ. It may be noted that this chapter belongs to about the fifth year of the Holy Prophet's mission, as portions of it were read out before the Negus by Ja'far, who was the head of the Muslim immigrants to Abyssinia. Thus Islâm had set before itself from the very first the grand object of the reformation of Christianity. The particular point on which stress is laid in this chapter, as against the fundamental errors of the Christian religion, *Sonship* and *Atonement*, is that Allâh is *Rahmân* (Beneficent), and does not require any compensation to forgive sinners. It is for this reason that the name *Rahmân*, in preference to all other names of the Divine Being, is mentioned over and over again in this chapter. And the key to the whole position is contained in v. 92 in the words: *It is not worthy of the Beneficent that He should take to Himself a son*. In fact, the doctrine of Atonement is contradicted by Christ's own words in the Lord's prayer: "And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" (Matthew 6:12). A human being is said to forgive his or her debtor when he or she remits the debt and does not exact any compensation. Even thus does Allâh forgive the sinners; He needs no compensation.

96a. Allâh's *bringing about love* for the righteous means that He loves them Himself and inspires love for them in the hearts of other people, while they also love Allâh as well as their fellow-beings. The righteous servants of Allâh are opposed at first, but gradually their goodness prevails and they are loved and admired. There is a prophetic reference here to the great love with which the hearts of the enemies of the Prophet were to be inspired in the near future. And even today the hearts of men are being inspired with greater and greater love for him as the world witnesses the good, which he did, to humanity.

97 So We have made it easy in your tongue only that you should give good news thereby to those who guard against evil, and should warn thereby a contentious people.

98 And how many a generation before them have We destroyed! Can you see anyone of them or hear a sound of them?